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INDIA IN 1983.

Ταῦτα δ' ἐν τῷ δαίμονι
Καὶ τῇδε φῦναι χἀτέρᾳ

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PREFACE.

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THIS feeble attempt at a divination of the distant future was originally published during the *sturm und drang* of the Ilbert Bill agitation, and was withdrawn from publication when the virtual abandonment of the principle contained in that measure marked the nadir of the not too vigorous administration of Lord Ripon. It is now, perhaps, rashly reproduced without alteration, though possibly owing to recent political developments, this trifling skit may not have become so utterly pointless as such ephemeral publications are wont to become after the lapse of a few years. At all events, on one subject—that of the conversion of the late Prime Minister of England to the cause of Irish Home Rule—the author may claim that his vaticination has been fulfilled to the letter, and it rests with the gods who preside over the destinies of the bewildered British public to avert the fulfilment of the rest of the prophecy. Ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γουνασι Κεῖται.

The author would not willingly be ranked among the blind contemners of a "New India," and the possible developments of political and social activity of which the National Indian Congress is perhaps but the faint foreshadowing. But it is the "note" of every great subject that it can be looked upon from many points of view, and there can be no doubt that the crudity of many of the ideas which ferment in the educated minds of the present day afford tempting material to the trenchant criticism of the satirist. To the serious dignity of a satire, however, this little volume does not aspire, but rather to the unrespected rôle of facile and superficial persiflage. As such, it may perhaps amuse and instruct the leisure half hour of some Newspaper Editor of the lower stratum of vernacular journalism, or of some British Radical M. P. on the tour in India, "at which," to use the simple and picturesque language of the author of "English as she is spoke," "we dedicate him particularly."

1888.

CHAPTER I.

THE year 1983 was a memorable one in the history of England. Not of course as the judicious reader will understand 'memorable' in the antique sense, as rendered famous by some great national triumph of the military or diplomatic order,—such vulgar exploits the great English people had long since learned to estimate at their proper value,—and a monument erected in Westminster Abbey to the enterprising merchant who first invented the art of constructing what was apparently a bale of cotton goods out of a combination of newspapers and mud, while it showed that commercial morality is a progressive science, also showed that the Gospel according to MacCroudie, had finally superseded the older revelations, and that the

minds of men were reasonably enough fixed on things below, not on things above. It will therefore be seen that this *annus memorabilis* was of different guess sort—to adopt a pure old English phrase—from those which had been thought worthy of notice in earlier and more primitive times, and in fact the two claims which it professed to make on the attention of posterity were that, during its span, Home Rule was at last granted to the irrepressible aspirations of the Irish people, and that what had long been denounced by all thoughtful politicians and advanced thinkers as an unspeakable anomaly, the British Empire in India, suffered final and official extinction. The contrast between the ways in which these two changes were effected was very striking. It was only after the painful experience of a month's wrangling over a perfectly trivial topic, and after threats of actual violence, that autonomy for Ireland came to be considered as within the range of

practical politics, whereas the whole question of the abandonment of India was settled in half an hour. No fierce opposition to the proposal to dismember this ancient monarchy, no clinging attachment to the long tradition of English glory in the East, prolonged the debate on the Bill, which, with a fine sense of humour, was called a Bill for the better government of India; indeed, the House had not energy enough, when the matter came up, to indulge in emotions of any kind. A month of yells and eloquence from the members, who represented Ireland, for the Bill which preceded the India Bill, and the long debate on which was as the ringing of the chapel bell, and brought Home Rule within measureable distance, referred, it need hardly be said, to the affairs of the sister island, had predisposed what were technically called statesmen to acquiesce with alacrity in any measure which might tend to shorten the long agony of the dissolution of the British Empire. And indeed

the apathy displayed might partly be accounted for by the fact that it was no new idea that at last took shape in a Parliamentary edict. For some fifty years the "Perish-India League" had existed, whose avowed object it was to sever the connection between England and her vast dependency, and who, in season and out of season, but more especially out of season, had denounced the infamy of attempting to govern for their good alien races of a different colour and civilization. To this League attached themselves men and women of divers erratic persuasions: the Anti-opium-trade Society, who saw that if India were abandoned, the virtuous and sober Chinaman would probably be no longer able to consult his own tastes in his preference for Malwa-grown opium; the Peace Society, who considered reasonably enough that were India and the fortresses on the road to India given up, the prospect of England ever being involved in war would become a remote

contingency; the Temperance Societies, who gave the League their support apparently under the idea that the possession of India gave Englishmen a haughty and swaggering character, a kind of temper having affinity with strong drink, but it was not until serious politicians of the advanced Radical school took it up that the League became a real political power. It was then pointed out to the working classes, that it was solely the bloated armaments entailed by the possession of India that prevented the realization of that most glorious of ideals, a free breakfast table; that, were India abandoned, cocoa might be untaxed and the working classes, it was calculated, saved about twopence a week each man. Here was a gorgeous prospect,—twopence a week left to fructify in the pockets of the people, and cocoa every morning for breakfast. The imagination reeled before the ecstatic vision, the British workman was convinced, and when conviction

had dawned on the sons of toil, the further step of convincing Parliament was usually not far distant.

All, however, were not quite satisfied. On one occasion a deputation of the leading merchants of London, Liverpool and Manchester, waited on the Marquis of Birkenhead (the head of the house of Stanley had been granted this title instead of the feudal style of the Earl of Derby, as being more in accordance with the spirit of the age) and expressed their clear conviction that trade, which had always followed the flag, would be disastrously revolutionized, and that England would no longer take the lead in commerce, nor indeed in anything else. They found that distinguished statesman, who had all the cool common-sense which was the leading characteristic of his great ancestor, the Lord Derby of the Victorian era, looking for orders from his masters, as he termed the process of perusing the less informed journals of the provincial

Press, with his mind as usual perfectly open and in favour of any course except that which might entail action even of the most infinitesimally humble description. He listened with exceeding patience and suavity to their address, was disposed to think that there was a good deal in what they said, and was perfectly ready to write reams of despatches couched in the mildest possible terms, if that would in any way relieve the minds of the deputation. "But, gentlemen," he observed, "you must remember that national greatness consists in having no points where you can be attacked. If we give up India, our liability to attack will be much diminished. Canada is happily united to the great American Republic, the other colonies are independent, and there will remain really only our own dear but comparatively insignificant island. We are only too glad to see our neighbours adding country after country to their dominions, as it affords a greater area on which

we can make our assaults" (as if the meek British Government ever dreamed of assaulting any one); "indeed," he went on to say reflectively, "if we could only hand over Ireland to the United States, and half our coast line to Germany, and the other half to France, we should attain true national greatness, for it is difficult to see how we could be attacked at all. But these are perhaps visionary dreams," he continued, smiling, "and no one has ever called me a visionary dreamer," which was quite true, no one ever had. "However, gentlemen," he resumed, "you may depend upon it, that I will seriously and anxiously consider the memorial you have been good enough to lay before me," and here he was as good as his word, for in downright honest consideration of a matter unattended with any results whatever, there was no statesman in Europe, who could hold a candle to the British Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Another proof of the goodness of their cause

the Radical Party discovered in the extraordinary unanimity of the foreign Press on the subject. The *St. Petersburg Gazette* (Russia, I may mention, had for some years firmly established her protectorate over Afghanistan, and had standing camps at Ali Musjid, Kandahar, and in the Koorum Valley), warmly eulogized the proposal to hand over India to a constitutional government of its own as the most sublime instance of moral self-abnegation ever exhibited to the admiring world since the emancipation of the serfs by Alexander II. The *Novoe Vremya* said, that it wished Russia had sufficient magnanimity to follow the example set by England. The *Golos* frankly recommended the Government to send agents at once to all the principal native courts to stir up strife, to largely increase the garrisons in Afghanistan, and to issue orders for the mobilization of the troops in Central Asia. The advice was well meant, but as all the measures

suggested by the *Golos* had been already carried out some months before, the paper was promptly suppressed as representing too crudely the policy of the administration, and tending to excite ill-feeling between Russia and her ancient ally England. The editor was likewise sentenced to a fine of 5,000 roubles and to three months' imprisonment, and had leisure to reflect on the remarkable logicality which distinguished the proceedings of his Government. The French, German and Italian journals, vied with each other in their admiration of the disinterested conduct of England, but their praise was not unmixed with some slight irony, and all urged their respective Governments to take advantage of the concentration of the British Empire. Italy presumed that now Malta would be annexed to the Peninsula, the Spaniards put in a claim for Gibraltar, and the French intimated that Aden would be absolutely necessary for them as being on the road to their gigantic

empires in Cochin and Madagascar, and regarded it as absolutely certain that the English interest in Egypt would now definitely cease. In fact, the Empire was to be disposed of, and the nations gathered together to see what they could get by bargaining or force.

In the meanwhile the English Government was so fully occupied with its own domestic affairs that foreign opinion interested the nation but slightly, and the imminent evacuation of India hardly at all. It need not be said that the eternal question of Ireland formed as usual the main topic of Parliamentary discussion, as indeed it had done for generations past, and during the last hundred years the annually renewed debates on Home Rule had helped to keep an interest in the affairs of that melancholy island alive. The method of procedure which almost amounted to a political tradition had been usually as follows:—When the Conservatives were in office, the Liberals and Radicals

announced with wearying iteration on every platform of what was still playfully called the United Kingdom, that when they came to power, Home Rule was a matter which would mainly engage their attention. This was a tolerably safe promise; a matter that fifty wild Irish members had set their hearts upon was not unlikely to engage the attention of anyone who was not both blind and deaf and who had the misfortune to sit in the House of Commons, and it was only after the elections were over, and the Irish vote had assisted to smite the Conservatives hip and thigh, that the full meaning of the perfidious promise had been suffered to dawn on the intelligence of Irish patriots. The matter engaged the attention of the Ministry, and that was all. However, this black-hearted Saxon treachery, as the Home Rulers mildly termed this little manœuvre, was usually overtaken by speedy chastisement. The Conservatives hastened to assure the Irish Party, that were they

again to appoint the denizens of Downing Street, the aspirations of the Irish people, which were, as the speakers pointed out, strictly conservative, as tending to restore the *status quo ante* civilization, would be treated with the consideration they deserved. The Irish, a race ever trustful and confiding, plumped to a man for the Conservatives at the next general election, and when that party found themselves firmly seated in powe the Irish aspirations were ——treated with the co. sideration the Ministry then thought they deserved. In this pleasing state of see-saw, varied by an occasional avowal on the part of the Prime Minister of the day, that Home Rule was an open question, and the simultaneous declaration of two other members of the Cabinet that the Irish demands would never be conceded, matters had gone on satisfactorily for some years to the utter demoralization of each rapidly succeeding Ministry. The sinister combination of Home Rulers with the

Opposition turned out Government after Government, and to the excited imagination of Irish patriotism Home Rule appeared as distant as ever. At last in 1983, the leader of the Irish Party had observed, that if Home Rule were not granted this session, the Irish would march in their millions on the House of Commons, and it was this remark of his that had made both parties slightly concerned and anxious. It was difficult for an impartial spectator to discern why Home Rule was still looked upon as a desirable acquisition. The Irish certainly had it all their own way in their own country, and the words of a revered statesman of the last century that every Irishman should feel that the Government was conducted by him and for him had been more than realized. The landlords had all died of starvation and gun-shot wounds, the last survivor being a stout old country gentleman, who entrenched himself in the fastuesses of Galway, and who for some years

successfully withstood all assaults from the Invincibles. He inhabited a machicolated tower surrounded by land torpedoes and defended by mitrailleuses, and lived in a regular state of siege, his only amusements being to walk on the parapet of his tower and dodge the bombs and bullets which were fired at him, and to get an occasional pot-shot from behind an embrasure at one of his late tenants. At last a dynamite bomb, judiciously dropped from a balloon on the top of his tower, terminated the career of this fine old Irish squire; the jury at the Coroner's inquest brought in a verdict of "death by the visitation of God," and the newspapers headed an account of the incident as "Further progress in decentralization." The Irishry, as they delighted to call themselves, then proceeded to squat in myriads on every available piece of land free of rent, and devoted their great minds to the cultivation of the potato and the breeding of pigs and children. The Police were appointed

by the Local Boards, and were always ready for a frolic, such as 'removing' a creditor (this, however, was rare, for credit had almost ceased to exist), or houghing the cattle and drowning the crops of an unfortunate neighbour who happened to have an English name. This latter pastime had also, in a great measure, ceased for want of material to operate upon. However, there were always feuds and forays to occupy the leisure hours of the Constabulary, whose lot, to vary slightly the words of an almost forgotten song, was distinctly a happy one when their duty as policemen had to be performed. The country in fact was governed entirely according to Irish ideas, and each man felt himself at liberty to drink, fight, and periodically die of starvation as much as he pleased.

In the House of Commons also the Irish members had all the freedom of debate, and drank as much delight of battle with their peers as they could have expected to do had that

Assemblage been seated in College Green. The clôture had indeed been passed in the last century, but it had only once been applied to Irish eloquence, and the experience of the House on that occasion had been sufficient to deter the Government, from ever attempting to apply the remedy again. A free fight had ensued on the announcement of the Prime Minister that the clôture was about to be put in force, the air was darkened with flying inkstands, the Ministerial bench was cleared by the application of shillelahs (now a regular accompaniment of Irish members in the House of Commons), the mace was sent flying at the Speaker's head, and narrowly missed the wig of that venerable official, while the Black Rod and Sergeant-at-Arms were kicked round and round the House, and finally sent spinning into Palace Yard, where they were received with unsympathetic yells and derision by an interested mob of spectators. After this scene it became an unwritten law of

Parliamentary usage that the clôture was only to be applied to the unfortunate Opposition of the day, and was not intended to be a gag on Irish eloquence. The Castle likewise with its vermin officials had ceased to harass the souls of Irish patriots, its existence having been terminated by the simple expedient of blowing the whole edifice with its Under-Secretaries, records, and clerks, into the air with a charge of dynamite, and when it was proposed to rebuild the Castle and re-establish the offices, the opposition of the Irish members and the reluctance displayed by officials to take up the duties of those who had literally gone aloft, had caused the matter to hang over. The last three resident Viceroys had been shot, and the one before stabbed, so that the post, as long as it entailed residence in Dublin, was not eagerly sought after by the members of the British aristocracy. Yet such is the tendency of titles to outlive the state of things they represented, as the

Kings of England continued to be Kings of France long after the French had marched into Calais, that there was actually still a Viceroy of Ireland, a title usually bestowed on some respectable old nobleman belonging to the Party in power, who drew a small stipend, and spent his time in toddling from his house to his club, and who derived his sole knowledge of Irish affairs from a perusal of the *Irish World*, now the leading newspaper in Dublin, and one which the Reform Club regularly took in. It was with the view of further protecting this harmless old fossil of a statesman that the Government proposed an Act, whereby anyone who presented a loaded weapon at the poor old gentleman, or attempted by overt means to compass his death, *might* (observe the permissive character of this legislation, and the Prime Minister of the day, Mr. Gladstone Herbert, expressly stated that it would only be acted upon in extreme cases)—be called upon by

a Magistrate to show cause why he should not be bound over to keep the peace. This terrific enactment naturally aroused the keenest opposition on the part of Irish members, and was denounced with almost equal violence by the advanced Radicals, who said that the barbarous laws of the Middle Ages, and the feudal Inquisition (history was not the strong point of the Radical Party) might be ransacked without the searcher being able to discover any law more cold-blooded and ruthless in its detestable interference with personal liberty. The Irish members shouted that the historical enquirer would have to go back to the law passed by the bloody Elizabeth, and that "ould blay-guard" Cromwell, or to the measures which disgraced the reign of the no less sanguinary Victoria, to find a parallel to this base and bloody piece of coercion, and so the struggle had gone on for some weeks, and the flowers of speech interchanged between the parties were of the most

invigorating and lively description. "The honourable member for Cavan has himself threatened the virtuous and venerable nobleman, who bears the honoured title of Viceroy of Ireland with an umbrella," said the Prime Minister in the course of one of his speeches against proposals to adjourn the debate. "Ye lie, ye thafe," shouted Mr. Biggerstill, leaping on to the floor of House; "ye lie, jist come out here, and I will tache ye, shure I went for him wid a shillelah;" and a roar of laughter from the Irish benches confirmed the accuracy of his correction. The Speaker of course named him, a procedure greeted with renewed cheers and shouts of delight from the Home Rule Party, who danced on the benches in their ecstasy, and greeted with uproarious applause a more than usually dexterous shot at the Speaker's nose with a potato which disarranged the wig of that respected officer of State, and caused the tears of anguish to come into his eyes. For a month

this saturnalia lasted, till four Chairmen of Committee had died of exhaustion, and the Prime Minister had fainted nineteen times. At last the Home Secretary, who looked jaded and spoke with faltering accents, announced that the Government had resolved to take the only statesmanlike course left open to them, and to withdraw the Bill. This announcement was greeted with roars of laughter and applause, and the Irish members, who had kept themselves fresh on the relay system, tumbled out of the House to enjoy themselves in their own innocent and artless way by breaking the windows of the unfortunate Viceroy who lived hard by, and chasing an unpopular member of the Conservative Party round and round Trafalgar Square. Forty members remained behind at the earnest solicitation of the Government Whip to pass the India Bill.

The Prime Minister, Mr. G. Herbert, walked home after the debate in rather a saddened

frame of mind. The business of the country did not seem to have made much progress during the last month, and the hurrying of the mob towards the Viceroy of Ireland's house and the subsequent crash of breaking glass reminded him how singularly abortive his last attempt at legislation had been. It was then, as by a flash of inspiration, that he conceived that the time was come to grant Home Rule, and so get rid of these turbulent members with their obstructions and demonstrations for ever. His mind ran with startling rapidity over the old familiar arguments in favour of the measure, which seemed now to have acquired new force and consistency, and with that remarkable facility of conviction, which was his leading characteristic, he was by the time he arrived at his house, firmly assured that if ever there was a measure which embodied all the high principles which dictate human morality, and if ever there was a cause to which from his earliest years he had

unswervingly and enthusiastically devoted himself, that cause and that measure was Home Rule for Ireland. The heads of the speech in which he would introduce the reform passed lucidly before his imagination, and the terms in which the next afternoon he was destined to electrify his audience by a declaration of his new-born convictions, rose spontaneously to his lips.

In the meanwhile, in a thin and drowsy House of forty members, the Marquis of Partington brought forward his Bill for the better government of India. He had spent nearly half an hour that afternoon at the India Office, the first time he had visited that building for months, in endeavouring to master the details of the measure he was about to propose; however, as everything had been practically settled out-of-doors before mass meetings, according to the practice of the British constitution, any trifling confusion in his statement was not regarded as

a matter of much importance. He would not, he said, detain the House long, the matter had been before the country some time, but he might mention that it was proposed to hand over the government of India to an assembly elected, he believed, by universal suffrage, but on that point he was not quite sure; however, India would be abandoned altogether, and the British troops withdrawn. He begged the House's pardon; he saw in the rough notes he had made that afternoon that the suzerainty of the Emperor of India was to be maintained. The House would remember that suzerainty had been maintained over the Transvaal for about a hundred years, and no one had yet discovered what it meant (faint laughter). It had given us no trouble there, and he did not apprehend that it would give us any trouble in India. (feeble ministerial cheers.) He also added that expenditure, he believed, might now be so much reduced that a free breakfast table might be looked for, but the

Chancellor of the Exchequer would deal with that branch of the subject at some future time. He also added that it was the greatest instance of national magnanimity ever offered to-er-er ("admiring universe," whispered the Under-Secretary, who was near at hand to coach his chief) "an admiring universe," said the Marquis. At this moment the fall of three or four hats reminded the orator that most of his audience were asleep, so stifling a yawn, Lord Partington hastened to conclude. He proposed to read the Bill three times that afternoon, and send it up to be passed by the Lords that evening, and to get the Royal assent to-morrow. He was not quite sure where His Majesty was; when he last heard of him, he was shooting somewhere in the Rocky Mountains, and that was about two months ago; however, if he could not be found, the Chancellor could do all that was necessary. He thought that was all; ah, yes, if the Bill was passed to-day the Viceroy could get away

by the next mail steamer, which he was anxious to do. He therefore begged to propose that the Bill be read three times and passed. The Speaker woke up with a start to put the question, when a short plethoric gentleman of an old-fashioned military appearance started to his feet—"I protest against this," he shouted, "the country is going to the dogs, but all I can say is, by Gad, that Joe Quihye will never ——." What the gallant General was never going to do remains historical uncertainty to this hour. The clôture was swiftly applied to him, and the question put; thirty-nine majority for the Bill, one against —— the apoplectic old General, who shouldered his umbrella, and marched wrathfully out of the House with strange old-world oaths and ejaculations—"By Gad, sir," "country going to the d—l," "cursed Radicals," "d—d niggers," such were the unaccustomed sounds that fell on the ears of members, and grew fainter in the dis-

tance as the indignant old warrior marched away. "An interesting study in primeval psychology," said one rising member of the Radical Party, as the Bill was read a third time, and sent up to the House of Lords, who dropped in by twos and threes to pass it, and then went home to dinner. Radical browbeating for a hundred years had reduced this once famous assembly to a humble registrar of the People's Decrees, so they meekly passed the Bill, quite content if only they could escape vituperation; the Royal assent was given the next morning by the Chancellor [the King could not be found], and the news was telegraphed out to the Viceroy of India, who issued orders to complete the embarkation of troops on the transports assembled at Bombay, and prepared for his own speedy departure.

The great debate which followed on the subsequent days, and which terminated in the revival of an Irish Parliament, lies outside the

sphere of the present humble chronicler—how Mr. G. Herbert, exceeded himself in the eloquence of exalted morality—how sighs of relief arose when the measure became law, and the Irish members cleared out in a body never to return: on these and all other kindred points the political student is referred to the well-known "History of Our Own and other People's Times," and Hansard passim—"*Nos neque hæc dicere * * conamur tenues grandia.*

CHAPTER II.

It will at once be seen that, before such a change as that described in the last chapter could be carried out, India must have made vast strides in moral, intellectual and material development. And such indeed, under a succession of liberal Viceroys, was announced by Radical journalists to have been the case. Captious and carping critics might have maintained that the spirit of progress, if it existed at all, must have so completely exhausted itself in the moral and intellectual departments, which could only be treated by vague generalities, as to leave nothing over for the material side of life in which progress was capable of concrete verification. Such criticisms, however, usually met with the contempt

they deserved, and were felt to require no answer. It was unquestionably the fact that more Hindus spoke English, that the words they used were longer, and more detached from the sense than before, and that the importation of patent leather for the purpose of manufacturing shoes was more extensively developed, and that costume altogether was approaching nearer to a bastard occidental type. On the other hand, the broken-down roads, the decayed dispensaries and ruined bridges, were indeed not exactly indications of material progress, but when some inquisitive traveller questioned the native of the soil as to the cause of these phenomena, the answer he would get was that it was the work of "Kamiti," and if this statement conveyed no clear idea to his mind, he had only himself and his own ignorance of Indian history to blame. Students of Indian progress during the nineteenth century will remember that one of the priceless boons be-

stowed on the country by that great and good Viceroy, the Marquis of Ripon, was a system of what was humorously called Local Self-Government. This measure, with that remarkable unanimity which is always observed in the opinions of Anglo-Indians on Anglo-Indian matters, had, at the time, been variously described as a humbug and a fraud by some, and as a wise and necessary measure of statesman-like foresight by others. At all events, the reform amply justified its existence on the principles of Benthamism, and added most unquestionably to the general happiness of the great majority of our fellow-subjects in the East. In the first place, a Native Board having unlimited control over funds was an institution, whose proceedings every native could thoroughly understand, whereas the action of an unsympathetic and incorruptible Englishman had long been acknowledged to be quite incalculable. Here was an administrative body, which

could be touched with the feeling of one's infirmities,—which could lend an ear to the uncle who wanted employment for his nephew, to the poor man with the large family who had six brothers in-law and thirty-six cousins all desiring appointments,—which could sympathize with the fraudulent contractor, with the necessitous builder,—and in whose bosom the swindling overseer, who had been declared incapable of serving Government again in any capacity, could find a congenial haven of rest not unaccompanied with profit. The souls of all these innocent and worthy men were rejoiced, the money was blandly divided, and if no improvements were carried out, it was probably because the Boards knew, what no Englishman has ever been able to grasp, that, as a rule, the inhabitants of Hindustan prefer going along a bad road to going along a good one, and discern charms in a tumbledown and filthy serai, which a cleanly and well-kept building can

never afford. The great thing was, that you knew where you were with the Committees. Matters were arranged orientally, and at the bottom of the native character there is a profound sympathy with oriental methods of administration. It was perfectly certain that the larger part of the funds would stick to the palms of the members of the Committee, that their relatives and friends would compose the entire administrative staff, that no contract would be given unless a handsome commission were paid to the President and Secretary, and that any works that were constructed would be exclusively adapted to the improvement of the property of the President and members. All this was thoroughly understood, and the feeling it aroused was not one of indignation, but a simple desire to participate in the spoils. After all, was it not better that the money should go in this way than that it should be spent by a sahib on his eccentric notions of

sanitation, vaccination, and the like? These matters were serenely neglected by the Committees, but they well knew how thoroughly distasteful they were to the vast majority of their constituents, and so matters went on cheerfully, the people governed themselves, having entirely omitted the preliminary process of learning the art of self-government. However, the singular fact that no sort of training is supposed to be necessary in order to acquire the art of ruling was observed as far back as the time of Plato, and certainly stood in need of no further illustration. The curious reader may be tempted to enquire what functions the Government were performing during this interesting period of development. In some of the music-saloons in the Western States of America, where the performance is not of a very high order, the following pathetic notice may occasionally be observed over the instrument—"Please do not shoot at the pianist,

who is doing his level best." Such was the modest attitude of apologetic reserve assumed by the Government towards these remarkable Committees, and the two principal employments of the Administration consisted during these years in deprecatory contemplation of these fruits of self-government and (still more important) in the removal of anomalies. There is nothing, as all students of English history are aware, that the English as a race have a more rooted antipathy to than an anomaly, and it is only the carping spirit and mean jealousy of foreigners which make them persist in discovering so many in our glorious and perfect constitution. So, when it was realized in 1883, that it was anomalous that Englishmen should have the right to be tried by their fellow-countrymen, a most cheering glimpse was afforded of a perfect vista of possible reforms, and every succeeding Viceroy, with the enthusiastic applause of the Native Press and the

wild encouragement of every English-speaking native, rushed headlong into the intoxicating crusade. It had already been discovered that it was anomalous to appoint any Europeans to the lower grades of the Public Service; their exclusion from the higher grades also followed as a matter of logical consequence in a few years. Complete criminal authority to even the lowest order of Magistrates over every class of offender was speedily surrendered, and perfect equality before the law proclaimed amid general enthusiasm. Then the life of the forlorn non-official became one of constant and varied adventure. The hapless planter was ordinarily accused of rape about three times a week, and spent most of the intermediate days in answering miscellaneous charges, such as mischief by fire, theft in a dwelling-house, and culpable homicide amounting to murder. When he could snatch time from these exciting amusements, he would devote the energies of his mind to defend-

ing himself in the Civil Court, where thirty or forty suits to recover the whole of his property and an amount of debt that would fit out an American city, were constantly pending against him. As the Native Collector was frequently the cousin of the Judge, and the Commissioner the uncle to both, while all three usually had an interest in a rival zemindari, the English planter had to stick pretty closely to business in order to worry along at all, and though his astuteness was developed by this severe training, still the strain on his constitution gradually told, and occasionally he was reduced to such a state of bewilderment that he found it difficult to pick out his own signature from the hundred or so executed bonds which used to be filed against him in Court. Some years of this interesting existence, if he was fortunate enough to escape hanging or imprisonment, was generally sufficient to induce the planter to remove himself and his capital to some other land where perfect

equality before the law was not of such a pronounced type, and where plaintiffs did not rage so furiously together, and witnesses did not imagine quite so many vain things. So the great change which has been described in the previous chapter met with no opposition from Anglo-Indians, for the simple reason that Anglo-Indians had ceased to exist. The official and the non-official classes had alike undergone the process of removal almost as expeditiously as that kindred anachronism, the Irish landlord, till at last there were only four anomalies left—

1 British Army (including a Commander-in-Chief).

1 Viceroy.

1 Governor of Madras.

1 Governor of Bombay.

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The latter two bald-headed, obsolete, old institutions had survived in spite of all opposition

and really unanswerable denunciation. The opening afforded to politicians *en disponibilité* belonging to the party in power had proved too seductive even for Radical virtue to abolish, so they had continued to drag on a prolonged and unhonoured existence. However, even these four surviving anomalies were now, under the great Bill for the better government of India, doomed to swift extinction, and in their place it was proposed to erect what obviously had none of the characteristics of an anomally in India—a pure Democratic Parliament elected by universal suffrage. Every million or so of people were to choose one member, and for years the land had resounded with the din, or rather the cackle, of preparation. Babus and Vakils and English-speaking patriots of every shade of character and complexion overspread the land like a swarm of locusts, and a new order of beings, the canvassers, or in the vernacular dialect "khanwassurs," who rapidly, *more Indico*,

became a separate caste, only intermarrying among themselves, came into existence, and throve like a gigantic fungus. The elections were most satisfactorily managed, though the general apathy of the people, when not personally appealed to, was remarkable. The enormous posters which urged electors to vote for Ram Chunder Ghose, even when accompanied by the tom-tom, hardly roused their enthusiasm, but the "khanwassurs" adopted still more efficacious means of kindling political feeling, and early showed themselves to be perfect masters of their business. Some explained that, by affixing his mark on a blue ticket, and depositing it before the local official, the ryot secured an exemption from land-revenue for the term of his natural life. This concrete line of argument rarely failed of its object. Others adopted a more simple but quite as effective an expedient. Holding a rupee in the palm of his hand, and demonstrating the existence of the coin by flick-

ing at it with his fingers, the "khanwassur" would enquire if his interlocutor desired to become the possessor of that amount of current metal. The artless ryot would reply in the affirmative, and was then informed that the only preliminary was to write the name of a certain Babu on a ticket, or to affix his mark to a piece of paper which already bore the honoured signature of the Parliamentary candidate. Having done this, he was informed that, on the following morning, he should attend in person at the office, whither he duly went at day-break, and after an exciting wrangle of some hours, sometimes secured four annas, the rest having gone as "dustoorie" to the "khanwassur." Under these satisfactory auspices, the elections, so the Viceroy reported, had gone off with gratifying success. There were a few riots where some Mussulmans considered that killing a cow and sprinkling the Hindus, who happened to pass by, with its blood was not an inappropriate way of testifying their feelings

towards the candidate who of course was a Hindu, and when this expression of opinion was met by the counter-device of slaying a pig and throwing its corpse into a mosque, some slight disturbance of the peace usually ensued. But, on the whole, the Mussulmans held aloof in sullen indifference, the great Babu and educated Hindu B. A. league carried the day, and out of 365 members 360 belonged to these advanced and respected classes. The remaining five consisted of one daring Parsee, two old Mussulmans from a benighted province which had hardly been affected by Babu civilization, and had been entirely unmoved by Babu eloquence, one Englishman, a Mr. A. O. Humebogue, and one member belonging to a mysterious caste which bore the name of "Shalwashun." The origin of the caste, which now numbered about a million devotees, was lost in obscurity, but it appeared to be one of comparatively recent origin. Evidence pointed to its institution by a local saint

named "Thuckeyr" some time during the past century, and the prominent objects of worship among the "Shalwashunistas," as they were called, were a big drum and a cymbal. They also paid great respect to a malignant demon named "Sutar," with whom the founder of the sect had had apparently many spiritual or material struggles. It had been suggested with some degree of plausibility from some of the exclamations, such as Amin and Alliua, made use of in their invocations, that their religion was a bastard form of some Semitic worship, but the tolerant nature of Brahman polytheism easily admitted its followers into the all-embracing circle of Hindu superstition, gave local rank in the Hindu Pantheon with laudable impartiality both to Thuckeyr and Sutar, and persuaded the simple believers that Thuckeyr himself really was an incarnation of the first person of the Hindu Trinity. The big drum then, of course, represented the destructive power (it certainly

destroyed one's sense of harmony), and the cymbal naturally became the Symbol (the fact of this Europe joke being attributed to the original Thuckeyr, seemed to point to a Western origin of the sect) of eternity. It certainly represented this latter idea very fairly to the excruciated ears of those who happened to be in the vicinity of this interminable instrument. Other objects held in high veneration by these simple sectaries were the abstract notions of blood and fire, the latter idea being represented under several artless devices, such as the picture of a species of chair, which bore the legend "Ignite only on bokkus," and other kindred representations. They had various rites, one especially called "needuril," which, while it excited the astonishment of advanced philosophers, formed also a perpetual etymological crux to all students of the religious languages of the East. The Englishman, Mr. Humebogue, was elected as member for Simla, where he had been brought in by the

unanimous votes of the inmates of the Ripon Hospital, now transformed into a Lunatic Asylum, and almost the only building occupied in this once festive hill-station. He represented the causes of Theosophy and Vegetarianism, and also the eternal Immensities and Verities. His accession was felt to be a great source of strength to the House of Representatives. Such was the constitution of the Assembly which was to bring back the Saturnian age and renew the youth of India, in which, as a local Calcutta orator put it in an eloquent peroration, "Jurisprudence would go hand-in-hand with license, and Philosophy would be mamma to both, or to drop metaphor, where intimidation and superfluous insolence would go to pot, and peace and discordant harmony reign over the tranquil *genius loci*." It was with these high, though obscurely-expressed, hopes that the Parliament—"by those in earnest, those in mockery called" the Babu Parliament—prepared to legislate for and to rule their country.

CHAPTER III.

It was a still and broiling day in April when the last vessel sailed out of Bombay harbour with the English troops on board. The vast bay, which for a month before had been crowded with huge transports and resounded with the rattle of shipping cargo and stores, was now deserted, except for the picturesque native boats and the mail steamer which was to convey the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Governors of Madras and Bombay from the shores of India. A low haze hung over the Ghauts sleeping in the yellow sunshine, the light purple hills on the south lay basking in the glare of the intense heat, while beyond, the dim island of Kenneri, seemed raised above the slowly-heaving sea and to be suspended above the glassy

waves far down in the quivering and glaring horizon. It was as though the mighty Hindu gods were, after the storm and stress of English rule, entering peacefully on their ancient heritage, and casting over the land the divine spirit of their vast and brooding tranquillity. Such was the day which witnessed the final extinction of the British raj in India. The final extinction, as it was managed, was, however, certainly *not* an impressive spectacle, but the English are not masters of the art of ceremony, and, after all, the process of evacuating a country, where one has ruled as a conqueror, though capable of sympathetic treatment from the eloquential point of view, is perhaps rather too suggestive of being kicked behind to be a perfectly satisfactory performance to take part in. However this may be, the exit of the ruling power was distinctly not a dignified exhibition. The Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief drove down to the Apollo

Bunder in one buggy (this ancient anomaly by the way had survived a century of reform), and the Governors of Madras and Bombay followed in another. This was not transcendently gorgeous, but it was cheap, and as the House of Representatives would have declined to pass bills for any ceremonial expenses when the Viceroy had once left Calcutta, the Marquis of Letemrip was not the man to incur the wrath of the British tax-payer by any undue exhibition of magnificence. The party was not much insulted on its way to the bunder, the patient East in fact regarded with its customary deep disdain this part of the performance, as it had regarded the legions trampling past during the last month, and the people mostly looked on with apathy not unmingled with mild derision.

"I wonder why the sahibs are all going away," said one old Mussulman reflectively after the meagre cavalcade had passed through Falkland Road.

"Wah, wah, have you not heard the news?" said a Punjabi, who stood near. "Listen do you understand or do you not? The Russians have a machine that flies in the air like a bird and pours down bullets and fire like rain, and burrows under the ground like a fox, and destroys a whole army with the breath of its nostrils. May Allah be our protection! a terrible demon; so the sahibs go away through fear."

"You speak like a child," interposed a Pathan hastily, "the real case is, that the Amir of Kabul—may he be fortunate in war!—sent a message to the Lord Sahib that if the Feringhi army did not depart to Europe, he would bring fire and sword on the cities of the Punjab. Hence it is that they go."

"Peace, peace," said a third contemptuously, "the words of truth are not in your mouths. The truth is, that the Padishah of Roum, that mighty warrior—may the protection of God be

on him !—has, by the mercy of God, taken the King of England prisoner and keeps the accursed Kaffir in an iron cage in the bazar at Istamboul. He offered a thousand crores of ransom, but the Padishah would accept nothing, but that India should be given back to Islam. So it is given back to us. This is true, the Moollah told us this last night in the mosque."

"Ah, it is wonderful," said the first speaker, "but the Padishah of Roum is truly a great warrior;" and then the attention of the group was diverted to a passing Hindu creditor, whom and whose female relations they reviled with much freedom and point, and informed him in crude terms that his chance of ever getting his money was now infinitely remote, for the days of his idea of justice were past, and that the Courts would be closed before long.

Such were the theories which accounted for the remarkable phenomenon of departing rulers, and the matter was rendered so intelligible to

the native mind that they forbore from any outspoken expression of feeling. A few of the lookers-on jeered at and cursed the procession as it passed, and occasional mud was thrown after the humble vehicles, but it was not until the party arrived at the bunder when an Afghan rushed at the Commander-in-Chief with a knife that anything momentous occurred. However, His Excellency was hastily shoved on to the bunder boat unhurt, and it was not long before the mail steamer got under weigh and moved slowly out of Bombay harbour.

I am aware that more might be made of this episode, and that, as an account of a great historical transaction, the foregoing narrative is painfully bald and meagre, but as the immortal Mr. Chadband observes: "If the master of this house was to go forth into the city, and there see an eel, and was to come back and was to call unto him the mistress of the house, and was to say, Sarah, rejoice with me, for I have seen an

elephant, would that be Terewth?" Probably, however, the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* were correct in thinking that the British public would require more for their pennies than this, and that they would not be satisfied when they got something of a very different order. So, as has always happened in the history of that paper, the necessary supply of picturesque and perfectly accurate information was not wanting. The *Daily Telegraph* the next morning contained six columns of printed matter hea ed "From our Special Correspondent, Bombay," and apparently written from that city, though it was singular that the manuscript of this valuable addition to contemporary history was brought to the office of the journal by a small boy, a denizen of one of the courts in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street. However, the place of its composition was immaterial as long as the public got local colouring, and local colouring they had of the most gorgeous oriental description.

"Our Special" had set down to write almost exhausted with emotion. The scene of leaving he had witnessed that day reminded him of nearly every incident recorded in ancient or modern history, from Adam and Eve leaving Paradise, to the Emperor Alexander IV leaving the Winter Palace (he left through the roof, ejected by a bomb), showing a wealth of historical allusion which struck envy into the most cultured breast. Then he lapsed into exalted morality. "How different," he cried, "was the procession I have witnessed to-day from any Roman triumph that might have been seen two thousand years ago winding down the Tarpeian rock".— "What I like about the *Telegraph*," a country clergyman is reported to have observed, "is its scholarly tone," and this the lapse of years had not impaired. "How different the sanguinary processions of bloodthirsty conquerors like Wolseley or Roberts reeking with the gore of their slaughtered fellow-creatures from the sub-

lime spectacle of a whole nation absorbed in gratitude that I have contemplated to-day. A scene of parallel enthusiasm has perhaps never been witnessed in the history of the world, and had it not been seen could never have been conceived by the human imagination." (The honest chronicler wrote this last sentence with a grin.)

"But it is time that I should give my readers some idea of the spectacular magnificence of the great pageant of to-day. From Salsette to Chowringhee, from the Mall to the Carnac Bunder, all the vast population of Bombay turned out to witness the imposing show. The weather was perfect, a gentle breeze fanned the palm-trees which line Medows Street, and rustled among the banyan trees which overspread with their variegated foliage the ancient castle of Bombay. The procession in which it was computed that upwards of two millions of people took part was worthy of the ancient renown

and splendour of the British Empire in India. First came the Viceroy in a raised car drawn by four white elephants and surrounded by emblematic figures, such as "India" weeping for the departure of England, and idealized Secretaries to Government offering to Hindu maidens red office boxes containing Local Self-Government, Privileges and Constitutional Freedom. The latter idea was also tastefully and truthfully represented by an enormous many-coloured paper balloon, which unfortunately got entangled with one of the elephant's tusks, and collapsed before the procession was half over. Around the cars, nautch-girls with the picturesque gauzy garments and flesh-coloured tights which distinguish these oriental *danseuses*, gracefully pirouetted to the strains of what is known as a Europe band, the musicians being dressed in the ancient uniforms of British privates and producing sounds simultaneously but with perfect independence on all the instruments known to a

British orchestra. The Viceroy, who looked well, was most affable in his greetings to the crowd, and was constantly engaged in bowing and ducking his head to avoid the brick bats which his devoted subjects let fly at him. This last is an oriental method of expressing profound regret at the departure of a cherished guest, and was most typical of the emotions of the mob at this trying moment. Next came the representatives of every caste in India,—first of course Brahmins riding on cows, with sacred threads bound round their horns or gracefully depending from their tails. Then came a deputation of Mahometans of high birth and notorious sanctity, carrying in their hands their national dish of a boar's head. To them succeeded a countless series of other castes, among whom a curious sect called 'Shalwashun' attracted some attention from the singularly discordant noises they made on the big drum and with the trumpet, and the remarkable mixture

of Eastern and Western costume which they affected. After them came the kitmutgars and the bobbarchies, the latter order of nobles were especially favoured by a former Viceroy, Lord Lytton, followed by many others, the enumeration of which would, I fear, weary my Western readers. The enormous procession was wound up by the tág-i-rág and báb-i-tel, eastern words signifying the *hoi polloi*, who testified their joy by repeated shouts of 'urre budmash' and 'jao soor,' which means, 'may peace and prosperity wait on your path, and may the ways of ocean be made smooth beneath your returning feet.' This may seem a good deal for these four words to mean, but Oriental languages are very comprehensive. The House of Representatives, which was to meet for the first time on the following day, could not spare any of its deputies for attendance, but they were well represented by a Puttawalla, a high officer of State, whose bold and courtly bearing was

thoroughly representative of the stern and proud assembly to which we had with the fullest confidence handed over our Indian Empire. The Conscript Fathers of Bombay were represented by their Banghy, an eminent official whose duty it is to search for abuses, and whose emblematic staff of office, a broom, was typical of the thorough way in which his important functions are performed. The whole city wore an aspect of rejoicing, and exhibited its joy in a characteristically oriental fashion. Fountains ran wine at the corner of every street, and were chiefly patronized by Mahomedans, while oxen and pigs were roasted whole for the benefit of both Hindu and Mussulman visitors. Nothing was wanted to make a perfect Saturnalia worthy of the days of ancient Greece. I mixed freely with the people, and particularly devoted myself to ascertaining their real sentiments. I was principally struck with the extraordinary gratitude everyone, even

the humblest member of the population, appeared to feel towards the great nation which had restored them their liberty. On one grand old specimen of an oriental mendicant I pressed a rupee, pointing out that it bore the likeness of the Sovereign he had served with so much loyalty and devotion. The old man was deeply moved, and a crowd assembled round me, urging me to give them similar mementoes of their much-loved Emperor. Finding it impossible to escape, I presented some of them with copper pieces bearing the same exalted effigy. They received them with some discontent, and one man said 'Haramzada,' which means 'it is not meet that we should receive the likeness of our beloved Sovereign in any metal but the best and purest, which is silver.' The argument was sound, and nothing but the failure of the ready-money in my pockets prevented me from gratifying their simple desires. I found it difficult to escape from their over-

whelming demonstrations of loyalty and affection. Another point that struck me was the intimate knowledge they appeared to have gained of English politics, and the keenness with which they appreciated their new position as members of a free and constitutional Commonwealth. Such an advance in political education in a short hundred years struck me as phenomenal, but the pride and joy they felt in being governed by a freely elected assembly of their own countrymen were evidently not assumed, and imparted an air of dignity even to the humblest citizen of the great Imperial Republic. 'I value my privilege as a constitutional citizen,' said a lithe young Afghan to me, in his native Pushtu, 'the franchise is the pledge of my loyalty, and the dignity of our Parliament is reflected even upon me, a humble but incorruptible composite voter,' and his sparkling eyes showed how deeply he appreciated his position. I questioned him as to the great statesman, Mr.

Gladstone Herbert, who had bestowed this boon on his Eastern fellow-subjects. The tears rose to his eyes—'I would give all I have in the world,' he said, 'which is not much' (it certainly was not, as far as I could see, all he had was a rag round his loins and a crooked knife) 'to have half-an-hour alone with G. Herbert Sahib, or any other Kaffir: 'then,' he added in a tone of deep emotion, 'I would show him.' 'A Kaffir,' I may explain for the benefit of those of my readers who are not oriental scholars, is the nearest Eastern equivalent for a divine figure from the North. But I should exhaust my readers' patience, were I to attempt to portray the conversations I had with every class of natives. How a venerable high priest of a Parsee Fire Temple, with grey benignant eyes, and so on for about four more columns, varied by gorgeous descriptions of oriental scenery, and brief excursions into the histories of oriental conquerors; how Akbar would have enjoyed

the sight, could he have lived to see this day, which unfortunately he had not survived to witness; how Aurungzebe and Mahomed of Ghuznee would have revelled in constitutional government, then by an easy transition to the exploits of the British army, the thin red line; and how the Duke of Wellington dashed against a fiery few at Assaye with only *one*, till such brains as were left to the readers of the *Daily Telegraph* reeled, and the India section of the commonplace book of the worthy scribe was exhausted. Then he wound up with a striking peroration. "The pageant," he wrote, "is over, the tom-toms and fire-flies whisper among the palm-trees, the gay light of the cressets on the mosques slowly fade, the city is hushed save for the muffled roar of some wild dhobie and the distant scream of the prowling bhistie. I am alone, the one representative of the once ruling race, now in a strange land amid strange faces I retire to muse over the panorama of the past

and the wondrous events of the day, to seek refreshment and repose amid the gloom of sacred groves, classic buildings, and hallowed shades." The honest man was as good as his word; he *did* retire to seek refreshment, if not repose to some neighbouring (wine) shades amid the gloom of the classic buildings of Fleet Street, where he restored the tone of his gigantic mind with a drink.

CHAPTER IV.

THE rosy morn which ushered in the day on which the Babu Parliament was first to assemble was the herald of quite as portentous a world-phenomenon for Calcutta as the great day of departure had been for Bombay. But alas! on this occasion the sacred bard was lacking, owing to the fact of his having indulged too freely in his potations the night before in his oriental bower in Fleet Street. But indeed even a *Daily Telegraph* correspondent would have been hardly adequate to the present occasion, probably nothing but the ready pen of a Bengali Babu could have given the subject the sympathetic treatment it deserved. The splendour of the opening of Parliament was slightly shorn by the fact that the House was to meet in

the Town Hall, and the Sessions were to continue in that locality, which as one of the Deputies who had served under Government, observed, was only *sub-pro-tem* Parliament, till the spacious new Capitol, which was to cost fifty lacs, was prepared for their reception. This building, which was to be of the most capacious dimensions, and to contain a countless series of lobbies, in order to meet the tastes of men who, as a shrewd American observer had declared, were gifted with a natural genius for lobbying, was only planned and estimated for, and it was the civil estimates with which the Babu Parliament first proposed to grapple. In a small room on the basement was the one representative of the late ruling power—an official over whose office door might be discovered the following inscription—"Suzerain Office." The presiding genius of this department was a Eurasian clerk on Rs. 50 a month, and his duties consisted in supervising an office table and chair and a

bundle of forms headed "Suzerain of India to wit." What these forms were to be used for no one had formed the dimmest conception; however, as the clerk only attended to business for about a quarter of an hour a month, when he stepped in to smoke a cigar, the precise use to which he intended to put them was not a matter of very much importance. Nevertheless, the opening of Parliament was as satisfactory as it could be in such a mediocre building as the Town Hall, and the arrival of the Deputies in every species of vehicle, from the humble ticca-gharry to the dashing dog-cart and tandem, and the still more gorgeous break and four-in-hand, which the President of the Assembly used, excited the enthusiasm even of the Calcutta street boys—a race naturally given to the criticism of disparagement. Cheers from the bystanders greeted each Deputy as he drove up, and the shops were decorated with flags and loyal mottoes. One merchant put up "Thy

will be done"—a sentiment adapted to any form of government, but which was presumably meant on this occasion to apply to the Assembly. Another had, "Welcome to our Lord," the memorial of some Viceregal visit. Others had, "God bless the Prince of Wales," "Hurrah," "Goodbye, dear Sir;" and other equally simple and appropriate sentences. "Ah," said the President of the Assembly, Babu Joy Kissen Chunder Sen, to his Private Secretary, as he drove up saluted by all in his four-in-hand break, "truly, a four in the hand is worth two in the bush, is it not, my dear," and the Secretary, though the remark was not quite as intelligible as might have been expected from a person of the President's luminous intellect, nevertheless quite concurred in the justice of the observation. When the chief of the Assembly entered the hall, he was gratified to find every man at his desk, where inkstands and paper and copies of Roget's *Thesaurus of Words and Phrases* had been thoughtfully pro-

vided for the acommodation of members by the outgoing English administration. The last-mentioned valuable work, which had already done so much in forming the native mind, and moulding the style of Bengali-English, was intended to assist in the eloquence of debate, though indeed any such assistance was hardly needed, and to introduce variety of style to the speeches on either side of the House. He was also gratified to observe that the members had divided themselves, according to his strict orders, into Liberals and Conservatives. At first the arrangement of parties had caused the worthy President much perplexity. He had deeply studied the English Constitution, and was aware that no Government worthy of the name could continue to exist unless there were certain people to bring forward measures, and certain other people to oppose them, whatever they were. So he had to instruct his Deputies as to the nature and functions of an Opposition, and his

course of instruction was attended with some peculiar embarrassments. The first difficulty that had to be overcome was, that all wanted to be Liberals and to belong to the party in power —all, that is except the two old Mussulmans, and it would have been absurd to regard these two old fossils as a constitutional opposition. However, when the system was explained to the members, and it was pointed out to them that all would in turn hold office and enjoy the sweets of patronage, they gave in, and divided themselves, as the fairest and most practical arrangement, into equal parts, half being a Conservative opposition and half Liberal ministerialists. Mr. Humebogue, the Parsee, the Shalwashunista, and the two old Mussulmans were allowed to sit where they liked, and would have formed a kind of vagrant Fourth Party, only there was no Third. However, the Deputies had firmly stipulated that, on all questions of spending money, the entire House was to be consulted, and to this

the President had seen no objection whatever. He had likewise experienced much difficulty in forming a Ministry, as everyone, not unnaturally, wanted to be a Minister, and really, as far as administrative capacity went, there was not a pin to choose between any of them. However, some had superior claims as influential and wealthy citizens, and it was on the express understanding that the Ministry so formed was not to enjoy the delights of power for more than a week, but was then to make room for another set of disinterested patriots, that eight distinguished statesmen were selected, and the distribution of post was as follows :—

Babu Joy Kissen Chunder Sen, C.I.E., *President of the Assembly.*

Babu Bladeenath Laikatal, B.A., *Minister of War.*

Babu Rathanath Mounterjee, *Under-Secretary for War, and Inspector-General of Cavalry.*

Babu Seegyen Muchasik, B.A., *Minister of Marine.*

Babu Thumbuldoon Barrakjee, B.A., *Minister of Public Works.*

Babu Littleybhai Smakerjee, M.A., *Minister of Education.*

Babu Datsdeweh Demunny Ghose, B.A., *Minister of Finance.*

Mr. Europe Mookerjee, C.I.E., B.A., *Minister of things in general.*

The last-mentioned Cabinet Minister was so named by his fond and proud parents to commemorate the fact of his having been born in London. They were all eloquent, and the Minister of Finance, as was fitting, had more nephews and cousins than any man of his age in Bengal. The Cabinet were seated at the farther end of the hall near the President's chair, and looked as important as their attitudes, which were various, admitted of their looking. Their bearing had all the insolence of office, but the fact that most of them had drawn up their Europe boots on the broad velvet seats, while some were sitting with their chins playfully resting on their knees, slightly took off from the dignity of their presence. They were likewise chewing betel-

nut to a man, and their present mode of conducting the business of the country consisted of placidly supervising the operations of a red-coated chuprassie, who, seated on the floor with an enormous pile of letters around him, was engaged in opening them and stamping them with the seal of the House. The Ministry had perused some hundreds of these petitions, but finding that they all began, "Honoured Sir,—Having been given to understand that some places are about to fall vacant under your Honour's kind control, I beg to offer you my services for the same. I am the poor man, but belonging to high family, etc.," the amusement of opening them had slightly palled on the rulers of India, and the rest had been taken as read, and were doomed to be "recorded" by the chuprassie. Who were these miserable outsiders who fondly imagined that they were entitled to some share in the pickings of Constitutional Government Had not each member his quota,

of nephews and brothers-in-law for whom, actuated by that strong family affection which has so often been held up to the admiration of the Western world, he was morally bound to provide? So they lolled on their seats and conversed in whispers, while the chuprassie's stamp came down with monotonous regularity. However, on the arrival of the President, who marched proudly up the hall in his full robes of office, they straightened themselves and turned over papers with an air of official importance. Babu Joy Kissen Chunder Sen took his seat, and having just finished his breakfast, proceeded to eructate violently three or four times; he then blew his nose on the floor, holding that organ between his forefinger and thumb for the purpose, cleared his throat, expectorated, and finally rose and burst into a flood of eloquence :—

"Gentlemen, fellow-countrymen, shall I not say fellow-members of Parliament and Romans, lend me your ears. This is the proudest moment

of my *vita, ars longa, vita brevis,* as the poet says, when I see before me your physiognomies and visages all full of constitutional transformation; indeed, I am as it were in a hurly-burly, and say to myself, I am now in a more noble position than Washington, when he urged his troops against the myrmidons of Spain,—than Cleon in the Senate, when he severely reprimanded the Jacobins for their crimes,—than Cicero, when he stirred up his fellow-citizens to make war on the Carthaginians: all this I say is this princely house and more, sitting on its own bottom, and controlling the Financial, Judicial, Revenue, Secret, General, Political, Educational, and Public Works Departments of the Government of India." (Great applause. The President, like Todgers, could "do it" when he chose.)

"And now," continued the orator warming to his work, "is there a man with a dead soul who has never to himself said, my foot is on my

native heath, and when I look and see the country where my ancestors bled, and which they won by the sword" (his father had entered Calcutta with a single cocoanut, and laid the foundation of his fortunes by cutting it up into small pieces and selling them to little boys)— "when I see the fertile plains watered by the rolling Ganges, in the middle of which this best Parliament sits, then I think my bosom beats with patriotic exhilaration; I am proud of my countrymen who have built up this lofty fabric of constitutional magnificence, and who, I think, will continue to do so pretty well. For we are the advanced thinkers, and we show things to others, and nobody shows nothing to us. We are the heirs of the ancient wisdom of Aryavarta, we are the sons of the Bengal which has conquered India, we are the B.A.'s of the Calcutta University, superior to gentlemen educated at the Oxford, and if any one try to show his better enlightenment, or intelligence, or re-

presentative character, or benevolence, let us say. Pooh, Pooh, teach your grandmother to lay eggs." (Cries of "shahbash," "bahut utcha," and "go it, dear chap," and the Salwashunista proceeded to perform a brilliant fantasia on the big drum and to evince signs of beginning to "needurill," so that he had to be suppressed by the officers of the House.) "Let us then," continued the speaker, "go on like blazes in the course of civilization and progress, and guided by the teaching of theology, psychology, geology, physiology, doxology, and sociology, and all the other sciences that the *quidnuncs* boasts of, we can confront the unmitigated myrmidons of despotism, and say to the adversaries of freedom and jurisprudence, You be blowed! Let us each and all be Norval on Grampian hill, and rejecting rhodomontade, hyperbole, metaphor, flatulence, and hypercriticism, make for the goal of our hopes where to be or not to be, that is the question." (Rapturous applause.)

"Let us show our *cui bono*, and hermetically seal the tongues of our enemies not to be opened except by *vis major*. When I look round on this imperial, primeval and financial assembly, I call to mind the saying of my dear mamma, my son cut your cloth according to your coat; and, indeed, dear brothers, if not, how can do? (Applause.) Let us purge our souls with hiccup, so that we can see, and cut up rough when the base detractors of our fame make libel, and say, 'this Bengali Babu no use, we are the superior people,' so they go on always showing serpent's cloven hoof and falsehood making, but it is we who have the more lofty magnanimity, we have had the cultivated education;" and once launched on this topic, the orator proceeded for another hour or so, listened to with rapt attention, for the Babu was acknowledged to be the first of living Bengal orators, and his words were felt to be words of profound and weighty meaning. However, even Babu eloquence comes

to an end at last, and he proceeded to instruct them out of the profundity of his acquaintance with the working of the British Constitution how the business of the day was to be conducted. "First," he said, "you make humble address, then I give gracious reply, then we consider Budget, *verbum sap.*, bus!" The orator sat down covered with applause, and the two old Mussulmans woke up and said, "jo hukum" in their simple primitive way, amid the ironical sniffs of their more enlightened fellow-deputies. The next instant every man in the assembly was on his feet, each desiring to add his quota to the flood of eloquence which was evidently destined to be a characteristic of this model Parliament, and as all began to speak at once, the effect was impressive, though slightly confusing. Soon unseemly wrangling began, and such exclamations as, "You shut up," "you've got no *locus ystandi*," "chup raho," "you no catch yspeaker's eye," and the like, were heard through

the din. At last they began to make uncomplimentary remarks concerning the moral character of the female members of each other's families, and finally matters went so far that one Babu went through a complicated operation, which he imagined was clenching his fists (with the thumbs sticking out) and placing himself into an attitude of self-defence, which he accomplished by presenting his stomach to the front and holding his arms as far apart as possible. The President then thought it time to interfere, and ringing his bell to command silence, announced that the address would be postponed, and that the House would "become Committee and consider budget," and anyone who had a motion to bring forward should do so. Instantly the whole assembly were on their feet again, each man with his dozen or so of motions, and indeed the bills that were already filed on the notice papers of the House were remarkable for their number and variety. Mr. Humebogue

had submitted the modest proposal that vegetarianism should be enforced by law, and out of the three hundred and sixty advanced Hindu thinkers, who composed the assembly, three hundred and fifty-nine (the President being the one exception) had announced their intention of bringing forward bills, making the practice of slaughtering kine punishable with penal servitude for life. However, the hope of participating in the spoils of the budget rendered the restoration of order possible, and Babu Datsdeweh Demunny Ghose proceeded to unfold to the House his financial plans for the future. The first reform to which he invited the House to assent was in the matter of payment to members. They were aware (who better?) how much they had sacrificed to the cause of their country, "leaving *domus et placens uxor* to give themselves up to the service of Respublica," and it was only fitting that their grateful country should recognize their services in the only

way possible by remunerating them for their attendance. The entire country, he said, was in favour of this reform, and, as a proof of this, he begged to read an article from the *Hindu Patriot* (of which he was proprietor and editor, but this little fact was not mentioned), in which that influential journal warmly advocated the change he proposed. The article was read amid general satisfaction. He proposed, therefore, that every member should be paid at the rate of Rs. 5,000 a month while the House was sitting, and Rs. 2,500 a month when the House was in recess, and he proposed a vote of upwards of two crores of rupees for the purpose. The sum fixed showed how well the Finance Minister knew his countrymen, and how thoroughly he was aware that, under the circumstances, their love for their fatherland would induce them to be in session the whole year round. The proposal met with only one amendment, which was to the effect, that the sum should be raised

to Rs. 10,000 a month, but this was felt to be a little too much at first, so the original proposition, which indeed every member had intended to introduce himself, was carried by acclamation. The Minister next proposed a large increase to the establishment of the Honorable Chamber: about one thousand Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries and Deputy Adjutant-Quartermaster-General-Assistant Secretaries; also two thousand Record-keepers, Deputy Record-keepers, Deputy Assistant Record-keepers, and Deputy Assistant Commissioners, for the purpose of keeping records: likewise three thousand Commissioners for facilitating business, Deputy Commissioners for facilitating business, Assistant Deputy Commissioners for the same purpose, and in additon to these about a thousand *sub-pro-tem*-deputy-acting subordinate-assistant-official assignees for the purpose of seeing that business *was* facilitated, and the journal of the House written up to

date,—in all about seven thousand places he proposed to create, in order to assist in the work of legislation, and the appointments to these places he suggested should be vested in the members, each man having about twenty to dispose of. He was sure that the House would agree with him that these proposals were exceedingly moderate, would greatly accelerate legislation, and would provide many honest and worthy men with suitable employment. For this purpose, he proposed to set aside about three crores of rupees in the budget. The Deputies, each of whom had a similar motion in his pocket, agreed to these proposals also without hesitation, and it was universally felt that the work of carrying on a Constitutional Government was about the easiest and most alluring employment that the free and independent statesman could wish for. Then the discussion of the budget proceeded merrily, large grants were made to Hindu temples, though not

a member would have admitted that he had any faith in any Hindu deity, and literary societies and debating clubs, where young Bengal might begin to rise, as one of the Deputies expressed it, "like a lion refreshed with wine," also came in for their share of endowments. Special provision was also made for the marriages and funeral ceremonies of the members and their relations, in fact, so lavish were these honest men that, towards the close of the afternoon, the Assistant Deputy Secretary in the Financial Department discovered that there was a deficit of about eight crores of rupees in the budget. The idea of a loan was entertained and abandoned, as it was thought that the competition for the honour of lending money to the new republic might be slightly restricted, and no one could be discovered willing to float it, or indeed to have anything to do with it, under the impression that it might involve some pecuniary responsibility, so there was nothing for it but

to cut down expenditure. The item of pensions, "except to deserving men" (which enabled the Deputies to provide for their friends and fellow-castemen), disappeared at once, and then Babu Bladeenath Laikatal, the Minister of War, rose and made a speech, which stamped him at once as one of the leading orators of the day. It was a long denunciation couched in sesquipedalian eloquence of war, the military spirit and a standing army, all of which were, as he pointed out, anachronisms and anomalies. "The reign of peace," he said, "had began, the lion lay down with the unicorn, and wars, which brought money to wise men and counters to fools, had now become as obsolete as the Behemoth or the Shibboleth," and so on for some hours. His glowing peroration in favour of peace, which he described as "standing like type in a fount, from which sprang, like Venus rising from the dead, the dragon's teeth of the army of industry," was regarded as a masterpiece of reasoned

eloquence, and he finally carried his hearers with him when he concluded, "I pronounce that war is dead and buried, and I make epithalamium over his grave. God is God of Peace, and I will aid him to carry out his work in this department with all my power." Loud applause followed, and there was probably joy among the angels in heaven on learning that a young Babu, with sloping shoulders and a quiver in his knees, had finally decided to give his valuable assistance to the operations of the Supreme Being. However, the upshot of the debate was that half the army was to be disbanded, and the other half were to have their pay cut down fifty per cent. Having thus balanced the accounts, and satisfactorily accomplished their work, the Babus adjourned to refresh themselves after the labours of the day's session.

CHAPTER V.

THE Barrackpore Division, one of the most important, if not the most important, in India, was at that time commanded by Major-General Ahmed Shah. He was an Afghan by descent, a Barukzye, and connected by blood with the late ruling family in that country, though his ancestors had been for two generations settled in India. He was a man of about sixty, and had served in youth through all the ranks of the Anglo-Indian army. When the European officers were disestablished, he naturally rose to high command, and had strenuously devoted himself for some years to winning the affection of the regular native troops, and keeping himself prominently before their notice. Though not nominally Commander-in-Chief—this post had been bestowed on a Hindu Subadar-Major

of advanced age, who spent his time on his estate near Lucknow—he was in reality the foremost man in the army as occupying the supreme command in the most important division, the one at the head-quarters of the new Government, and the only allegiance he owed was to Babu Bladeenath Laikatal, the Minister for War, an army administrator, for whom he had naturally not the most profound respect. He had watched with mingled scorn and amusement the abandonment of their empire by the English, and the remarkable substitute they had provided to carry on the administration of the country; but Ahmed Shah was too cool and sagacious to risk anything by premature revolt. When the British troops were finally out of the country, and when the assembly had effectually discredited itself, as he felt perfectly certain it would do in a month or two, then the scramble for power would begin, and the man who was at the head of a compact and disciplined body of troops

—for he intended at once to force the Commander-in-Chief to abdicate his position—would naturally be an important factor. Visions of empire had passed before his imagination ; why should not he, a member of the royal Afghan House, establish a new and mightier Mogul rule at Delhi, and found a dynasty of distinguished princes who would re-establish the ancient Mussulman faith and carry their triumphant arms from Cabul to Cape Comorin? But matters were not yet ripe, so he made no overt move ; he only kept himself constantly informed of all that happened at the Native Courts, and of the temper of his own men, and was well supplied with the latest news from beyond the frontier, indeed, the only obstacle, as he clearly saw, to his ambitious plans, lay in the dominating position of Russia beyond the frontier, and for years past his intrigues had been directed to detaching his countrymen as much as possible from any infidel alliance, and outbidding Russia in the

offers she made for the support of the Afghan clans. His intrigues also aimed at getting some substantial agreement from the Muscovite power through the English Government that no attempt to interfere with India should be made, and in this he was entirely successful. The Russian Government bound itself by the most sacred of promises, the Emperor's own inviolate word of honour, to attempt nothing of the kind; but the wily Afghan knew precisely, and much better than the simple English Ministry, the value of these promises, and his anxiety on the subject was not much abated. However, it might give him a little time, and time was all important. If only he could consolidate his power before those accursed Giaours came pouring down from the hills, and if only he could threaten them in the rear, his success might be assured. But it was uphill work in Afghanistan, for Russia had commanding influence and was on the spot, and Ahmed Shah knew well that

the prospect of immediate loot would bring every Afghan regardless of future consequences to the Russian standards. His position would then be critical, as he would be forced to appear as the defender of India against his own co-religionists and fellow-countrymen. It was therefore with deep anxiety that he watched the course of events, and waited impatiently to see what line the new Assembly would take.

On the evening of the day when the House of representatives had first met, the General was sitting, after his frugal meal, in the verandah enjoying his hookah, and listening to the murmur of the night birds, and the rustling of the hot wind through the trees, while his mind was engaged in deep reflection on all kinds of political possibilities. His reverie was broken in upon by the sharp clatter of a horse's hoofs and the challenge of the sentry outside his house, and in a few seconds his Aide-de-camp, whom he had sent into Calcutta the day before

to report, came hurriedly into the verandah and saluted his chief. "General Sahib," he said, "have you heard the news?"

"What is it, son of Mahomed Ali," said the General rousing himself, "has Sindia declared war on Holkar, or are the Russians marching on Lahore?" Neither of these events were unexpected by General Ahmed Shah.

"No, no, but the news of Calcutta, of the Subah," replied the Aide-de-camp.

"I sent you to get it," said the old Afghan smiling, "how should I have heard it?"

"Why the Assembly," burst out the young man impetuously—"those sons of burnt fathers, may Allah confound them!—have passed a law disbanding half the army, and cutting down the pay of the rest one-half, to spend the money on their own filthy and obscene stomachs. What a Sirkar! thus to treat the men who eat their salt. I wish the sahibs were back again. What shall we do General Sahib, did you ever hear such a thing?"

The old General, to the great surprise of his Aide-de-camp, who expected a violent outburst of fury, listened quietly to this intelligence with a smile, which got more and more pronounced till at last he burst out into a hearty laugh.

"Is this true?" he said, "the Kaffirs! surely Shaitan has blinded the dogs; but hasten now and summon the Brigadiers and the Quarter-master and Adjutant-General, and order all the troops to be in readiness for an immediate march." Within ten minutes the staff were assembled at the General's bungalow, and a consultation of upwards of an hour ensued. What passed at their deliberations was not clearly known, but within two hours afterwards the rumble of guns and artillery wagons, the tramp of infantry, and the clatter of cavalry showed that the troops were on the move, and the direction they made for betokened that the entire division was marching straight on Calcutta.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Babu Burgesses of the great Indian Parliament were rendered slightly uneasy, on approaching the Town Hall the next morning, to observe a few pieces of artillery posted at the corners of the streets near the place of assembly, and to discover that the squares and lanes were thronged with sepoys, smoking and chatting, and apparently in high good humour. Their first impression was, that the army had spontaneously turned out to do homage to their elected Rulers, or that the President had arranged to give them an agreeable surprise by hailing their second meeting with salvoes of artillery. This pleasing delusion was, however, soon dispelled on observing the demeanour of the soldiers, who, whenever a member in his car-

riage was pointed out to them, made threatening and insulting gestures, spat on the ground, and cursed the unhappy representative of the people with all the volubility that Orientals know so well how to display in the art of malediction. These were not cheering symptoms, and the livers of the Elected of the People were turned to water within them as they reflected that it was just possible that the army might, as a body, object to having its pay cut, and might be apt to express its objections in a crude and violent form. However, nothing occurred to prevent the assembling of the Deputies, who took their seats and anxiously awaited the arrival of their President. That distinguished official, however, was, as usual, half an hour late—a course he considered consistent with his dignity, so that the members might receive him with due honour. He, too, during his progress in his four-in-hand, had been struck with the unusually martial appear-

ance of the city, but nothing occurred till his arrival at the steps of the Town Hall, where he found General Ahmed Shah surrounded by his staff awaiting him. The old General saluted the President of the Assembly with scrupulous politeness, and said, "President Sahib, I, on behalf of the army, have arrived in Calcutta in order to confer with your Honorable House on many important matters of State."

"Ah," said the Babu, nervously, assuming, however, a most official and dignified air that the slight tremor in his voice and suspicious quiver about the knees somewhat belied, "we shall be happy to receive your petition, General Sahib, but, under Appendix B, Rule 1, Clause 3, all petitions must be made on one-rupee stamped paper, and submitted through the proper channels—first, a memorandum to the Minister of War, who will make minute on it, and then will give in report to whole House, sitting in committee"

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The General listened to this procedure with some impatience, and some of his staff muttered under their beards that they would see the accursed Kaffirs further first before they would go through this constitutional regimen. "You see, President Sahib," he said, "our business is emergent, and as I wish to confer with the whole House, and not with His Excellency the Minister for War, perhaps it will be better that the audience should be given at once." "The Government," he added suavely, "should have all four doors open."

"Impossible, impossible," said the unhappy President, who was now trying to edge towards the door in order to escape from further colloquy "the rules are strict, one-rupee stamped paper is necessary according to law."

"Wah, wah," said the General, suddenly changing his tone, "this is the talk of children, and I am not a vakil to go about with stamped paper; the matter admits of no delay, will you

or will you not admit us to conference?" By this time the President had slided quite close to the door, which the chuprassie held invitingly open for him. "Any petition you make, General Sahib," he began in a quavering voice as he glanced round timidly to see if the way was clear, "shall receive our most anxious and careful consideration, our most anxious and careful consid——." At this moment one of the staff put his hand on his sword, and the President bolted through the open door like a rabbit, while the door was closed behind him before he could finish his sentence. The General was left discomfited on the steps with the closed door in front of him, and looked round on his staff with rather an ominous smile.

"Let us break open the building and blow these pigs from guns," said one of the more impetuous members of his following;

"Or burn the house down and roast the swine in their own fat," suggested another;

"Shall our General be treated like this by a set of uncircumcised dogs! Allah forbid," added a third, and then shouted "victory to the General Sahib!"

"Peace, peace," said Ahmed Shah, "no violence yet, come away, and I will issue suitable orders," and the party withdrew to where the sepoys, who had not yet fallen in, were standing.

In the meanwhile Babu Joy Kissen Chunder Sen, almost fainting with alarm, and seeing his own terror reflected in the faces of all around him, had seated himself in the Presidential chair, while one obsequious chuprassie fanned him with a hand-punka, and another offered him a glass of water. The assembly under the influence of vague fear, for they had heard something, though not all, of what had gone on outside, gazed anxiously at the President, and showed symptoms of being perfectly ready to fly at the slightest unaccustomed sound. The

President in the meanwhile gasped, rolled his head and ejaculated at intervals "urré bap-re!" "what a transaction," "wah wila," and finally, after rubbing his stomach, gŏt up and looked round at the Assembly in blank bewilderment. At this moment the report of a shot was heard outside, the members rose in agitation, and the seats near the back-door became suspiciously crowded. "It is nothing," said a chuprassie, on his return from a reconnoitring expedition, to the almost fainting President, "only a drunken sepoy has discharged his rifle by accident, he has been arrested, but Sahib, the Burra General, is coming again to demand admittance with his soldiers, and I heard him give the order to the artillery, that if he was not inside the door within five minutes, they were to fire at the building as soon as the signal was given." The perspiration stood in cold drops on the President's forehead, and as the news of this threat spread through the Assembly, a pale green hue pre-

vailed in every anxious countenance, and deep sighs and groans were heard around. This time yesterday they were comfortably "making budget" and hearing eloquence, and now—it seemed like a horrid dream, and their excited imagination depicted them surrounded by a mob of brutal and bloodthirsty soldiers. Was ever patriotic virtue so beset before! At this moment the summons to open was heard on the door, another shot was heard outside, which sent a cold shiver down every Babu back and caused another strategical movement of desire to get near the means of egress. The President arose and falteringly moved that Appendix B, Rule 1, Clause 3, be suspended, and that the House, in the exercise of its beneficent discretion, should consider any personal representations that the General might make. This proposal was approved and carried with nervous rapidity, and the doors were thrown open. Anything was better than that horrid shot should come

bursting through the windows distracting Babu nerves and perhaps destroying Babu life, or that fierce soldiers, with dreadful sharp swords and pointed guns should sternly eject the legislators from their luxurious seats of red velvet. So the doors were flung open, and General Ahmed Shah with his staff advanced to the centre of the hall. He gave the President a military salute and gazed round with ironical respect on the trembling groups of senators.

"President Sahib," he began in a clear voice and in pure Urdu, "we have been informed that your Honorable House, in the exercise of your exalted wisdom, has been good enough to vouchsafe some measures of reform to the army, and it is on this matter that the army desire to make some humble representations." The President nodded with some faint assumption of trembling dignity. "These measures," continued the General, "are, I grieve to say, not pleasing to the troops under my command, and they venture to

suggest others which I am confident that your Honorable House will approve of. Your Excellencies have decreed that half the army is to be disbanded, and the other half is to receive half pay." "On the contrary," he continued with a grin, "we propose that the army be increased by 50,000 men to meet the dangers of the State; that the pay of all be doubled; that the number of officers be increased by 1,000, and that all ranks of officers receive promotion and added batta. So you see that our view concerning the administration of the army are not precisely the same, and we venture to submit that our proposals be carried into law by your exalted House, and then we will continue to eat your salt, and defend the country from the attacks of enemies." The Assembly listened to this harangue with blank dismay, where was the money to come from, and what would become of the members' allowances, and increased establishments they had voted so cheerfully the day before?

" If my proposals are not carried out," the General went on to say, " there will be danger, for the soldiers are angry, so we hope the necessary law will be carried at once, and without delay."

A murmur of assent arose from the staff, and the President, finding that no other member betrayed any anxiety to make any observations, rose with a painful effort. "The House," he said, "cannot be dictated to by military violence, the House must be cleared, and the humble representations of the loyal soldiery will be debated upon and considered in due course."

" But this afternoon it must be done," urged the General, "the soldiers are impatient, God forbid that violence should be offered to this noble Assembly ; but justice must be done and at once." However, after some further wrangle, it was arranged that the General and his staff should withdraw, and the House proceed at once to deliberate on the proposal submitted to it ;

but the leaders of the army insisted on hostages being left with them to ensure the good faith of the House. This humiliating condition was instantly accepted, and the Parsee, the Shalwashunista, and the two old Mussulman deputies, who had surveyed the scene with a sleepy kind of amusement, were chosen by universal acclamation for this honourable service. The terms were accepted. the Shalwashunista ejaculated, "Amin, glory alliua," and the doors were opened for the military deputation and their hostages to depart. The affrighted members then caught a glimpse of batteries of artillery standing massed with the guns pointed on the Parliament House, of the serried ranks of sepoys with fixed bayonets apparently awaiting the order to charge and to put the whole House to military execution. A moment's glance was enough, and the trembling senators returned to their places; all idea of resistance was in each man's breast totally abandoned, and the desire for

individual safety was the supreme feeling of this proud House of Representatives. A dead silence fell on the Hall when the doors closed on the party of officers, and for some minutes afterwards nothing was heard but agitated whispers and suppressed groans. At last the Minister for War rose. "I move," he said, "that the House adjourn for a fortnight on full pay on the condition that the troops retire to their quarters, and that, at the end of fortnight, the matter should be reported on by a committee, and finally submitted to the whole House."

"But the General said we must decide at once," broke in the President, "ah well-a-way what shall we do, what shall we do; truly a live lion is more dangerous to meet than a dead dog" (even in that supreme moment his consciousness of his perfect mastery over the art of applying English proverbs did not desert him). "What course," he added, "does the Honorable House intend to pursue?" for indeed

in a matter of this kind, his constitutional knowledge supplied him with no precedent.

Mr. Homebogue rose. "The House," he said, "cannot deliberate with freedom under the guns of a hostile force. I move therefore that we adjourn till to morrow, and in the meanwhile use our moral influence to induce the troops to depart."

"Yes, yes, to-morrow, to-morrow," echoed all the Deputies, discerning therein a loophole of escape. "We will come to-morrow, and all shall be arranged." The rattle of bayonets outside added to the arguments in favour of the wisdom of this course.

"Very well," said the President in despair, "to-morrow we will meet and confront the danger, and, if necessary, die at our posts; you will all come to-morrow," he added doubtfully, as the entire House made a strategic movement towards the back-door.

"Yes, yes," they all shouted, "to-morrow,

to-morrow we will meet and die at our posts." There was a rustle of white raiment, a clattering of Europe shoes, a departing odour of cocoa-nut oil and betel-nut juice, and in two minutes the President and Mr. Humebogue were alone in the spacious hall.

"My brother," said the latter deputy, "these are the crises which bring out the moral worth of a citizen of Aryavarta; to-morrow our enemies shall be put to shame; but remember that, under any circumstances, there is no more noble death than to die in defence of representative institutions, and no better place to meet one's end in than this." Then he too disappeared out of the back-door.

The President, thus left alone, sent a hasty message to the General, that the House had adjourned for the day, and would meet again, and give final orders at 10 A.M. on the following morning, glanced at the few reports submitted to the House, one to the effect that Scindia was

massing his troops on Holkar's frontier, another that piracies had broken out on the western coast, and a third that the Afghans were reported to have attacked and looted Peshawur, on all of which he hurriedly wrote the word 'record,' and then he likewise took his departure, and the session was over for the day.

CHAPTER VII.

So all that night long the camp fires blazed "along the bridge of war," on the Maidan and in the principal squares and streets. The soldiers stayed near their posts, but the night was one of story-telling and merriment, nor in Homeric language did any man lack his share of the equal feast (δαῖτος ἐΐσης) with which the trembling, but expectant citizens, who but yesterday had applauded their representatives, hastened to supply them. At length the day big with the fate of India dawned, the red hot weather sun arose, and the agitated President, who had not slept a wink the whole night, and all of whose communications to his colleagues had been met with

the invariable answer "give salaam, an answer will subsequently be sent," prepared to go forth to the Chamber of Deputies. He had sent round for the Minister of War, and Mr. Humebogue to accompany him, but was informed that both these gentlemen had gone out, as he presumed, to the House, so it was alone that he drove in his four-in-hand, along the familiar way to the Town Hall. His reflections, as he passed along, were not of the most cheering description; indeed, like the messenger in the Antigone, who, in the exquisitely poetical language of Bohn's sublime version, "did not go panting, having lifted up a nimble foot," but said to himself "wretch, why goest thou where coming thou shalt suffer punishment," he was more than once inclined to turn round, drive off into space, and allow the history of India generally to slide. "Truly," thought the unfortunate man to himself, "the army is a very ferocious department, they have no sense of jurisprudence, the palla-

dium of our ancestors, but still," he reflected, recovering his dignity a little as he noticed a passer-by salaam to him, "it is duty, that stern voice of the daughter of God which makes mare to go, duty shall enhance my meritorious responsibility and make things all square," and buoyed up with these high, though slightly, incoherent feelings, the Babu proudly saluted the General, who was on horseback, apparently haranguing his men in front of the Parliament House, and made for that home of constitutional Government. He noticed with an inward shiver that the men were again drawn up in line with bayonets fixed, and that the artillery were massed in front of the building with the muzzle of every gun ominously pointed toward the hapless Chamber. However, it was too late now to retreat, so he ascended the steps and made for the entrance to the Hall. He was surprised to see none of the usual signs of life, and enquired of the chuprassie if the sahibs had come.

"*Koi nai aya, lekin dak aya,*" replied the man with a grin, and indeed the hall was empty, the inkstands and the Roget's Thesauri alone betokened where the patriots had once sat to govern their country. But the post undeniably *had* come, and the President's table groaned beneath the weight of official envelopes of all sizes and shapes. "There are 360 letters," added the peon, and a horrid suspicion flashed on the President's mind, which sent the blood to his heart and made the room reel round him. Three hundred and sixty members were absent; could it be that these letters announced their cowardly desertion? Impossible, and yet—"They have all become *non est inventus*" said Babu Joy Kissen Chunder Sen sadly to himself, as he seated himself at the table and gazed pathetically round at the empty seats. He then grasped the first letter that came to hand and read it, it was from the member for Mozufferpore.

"SIR,—I have the honour to bring to your notice the following facts, hoping that they will meet with your favourable consideration, and I shall, as in duty bound, ever pray. Your Honour is well aware that I am a poor man with a large family, and that plenty marriages, according to our custom, take place. My little brother is about to be matrimonially inclined, and no one can consummate his marriage but myself; I therefore beg your honour's kind permission for three months' leave on full pay, to which I am justly entitled by my long service to the State. I also pray for advance of Rs. 2,000 under kind resolution of yesterday's date, to be debited to No. 2 Sub-head, Civil Contingencies, &c., &c. I have, in anticipation of your sanction, which may kindly be sent by post, left Calcutta and proceeded to my native village. I, therefore, shall be unable, under the kind terms of your demi-official order of yesterday, to die at my post on the date assigned, but when I return after

three months' leave, the matter shall receive my earliest attention.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

RUNÉVÉ FUNKERJEE LEEVA PAL, B. A."

The Babu groaned and took another. on the outside of which was written the word "Immediately." This was from the Minister of Public Works, Babu Thumbuldoon Barakjee, who had been employed in the P. W. D. Secretariat under the old regimé, and who, to add to the dignity of his communication, had headed it "Leave and Allowances," and put in a series of fancy figures, somewhat like an algebraical equation, such as he had always seen on resolutions which issued from that distinguished department.

$$A - \frac{32-P}{XY\,2} - \frac{134}{M} - \frac{A}{B} \text{ of } 1983.$$

"HONOURABLE SIR,—

"With reference to your honour's order, dated 21st April 1983 (without number), directing me to die at my post, I have the honour to inform you, that I am suffering from boils in the hinder parts, which disqualifies me for any public duty. I append a medical certificate, showing that I am unfit at present to die at my post. I, therefore, request that six months' leave on full pay may be granted to me, and that pay in advance (which is admissible under the Code) may be given me. The money may kindly be payable to bearer, who is near Parliament House (round the corner, chuprassie will show him), who is trustworthy man of a first family, but please give so that bloodthirsty sepoys not see.

I have, &c.,

THUMBULDOON BARAKJEE, L. C. E."

B. A. AND M. I. I. C. E.

This was indeed painful, and the Babu President began to feel tolerably sure that each of

the 358 letters which remained contained a similar request for leave and pay in advance. He took up another, from the Minister of Marine, Babu Seegyen Muchasik, a personal friend of his, with whom he had shared his University studies, and had undergone painful training in equitation, once thought necessary for Government service, and in whom he had the fullest confidence. It ran as follows :—

"HONOURED PRESIDENT,—

It is with the deepest grief and consternation that I take up my *penna* to inform you that my beloved spouse has gone to Davy Jones last night at 9-30 P.M., Madras Time. The l' , of man has been officially declared to be 55 ears, but hers was a non-regulation death, for she kicked the bucket at the early age of 27. *Hinc illae lacrimae.* So I cannot leave my home, and I deeply regret that I must apply for leave on full pay for some months to manage my household affairs. For how can do? My little daughter

aged three months is too young and tender, nor has she the ready-money down, rupee, sôvereigns, goldmohurs, or what-not to make both ends of my grandmother meet. Therefore, dear Cock, how can I be with you to die at my post? On the expiration of my leave, if it be not necessary to take an extension, then I will return and die at my post with you, dear chap, good-bye, my dear.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

SEEGYEN MUCHASIK, B. A."

Here was a blow,—really he had expected better things from Babu Muchasik, but all alike seemed to have deserted him. He took up another; it was from Littleybhai Smakerjee, the Minister for Education, and it was couched in the form of a memorial, which, the writer probably imagined, was the usual method of correspondence with a high Government officer, and which, indeed, he had almost invariably adopted

towards his official superiors during his prolonged career in the Anglo-Indian Educational Department.

"The humble memorial of Babu Littleybhai Smakerjee, B. A., humbly showeth—

" 1. That your memorialist entered the service of Government at the early age of 18, having received first class education at Mission school.

" 2. That your memorialist served the Government with zeal, discretion, and courage for many years, and attracted the favourable notice of all his superior officers.

" 3. That your memorialist is now a member of the Supreme Parliament, having been elected under Regulation XX of 1981 by his fellow-citizens.

" 4. That your memorialist requests that your Excellency will point out to the Military Department that to offer violence to House of Representatives surely is to kill golden calf that

lays fatted eggs; that your Excellency should proclaim to licentious soldiery to beat their ploughshares into pruning hooks, and consider busy bee, who does not toil, nor spin, and yet is fed like ravens by Elijah. ('This man,' thought the President, 'certainly must have been educated at the Mission school,' but as yet the drift of his application was rather obscure.)

"5. Your memorialist also prays that your Excellency will at once bell the cat and make all serene through your noble courage.

"6. Your memorialist further prays that he is unable to meet licentious soldiery owing to risk of his life, which was undergone yesterday by your Excellency's kind commands, that he appends herewith a medical certificate showing that he is unfit to meet licentious soldiery owing to a pain in his stomach, and that, for the same reason, *viz.*, pain in stomach, he is unable to die at his post in accordance with your Excellency's benevolent commands.

"7. Your memorialist, therefore, prays that your Excellency will grant him leave on medical certificate on full pay ('Ah! the old story,' groaned the President) till such time as his health is restored and pain in stomach has ceased.

"And your memorialist, as in duty bound, will ever pray for your Excellency's long life and posterity."

The President put down the letter in deep disgust; what was the use of opening the others, which he felt sure contained similar modest requests? He placed his head on his hands, expectorated, and finally sighed. There was a certain monotony about these letters, and that unfortunate phrase of his as to members dying at their posts had come back to him with too much persistency, and under too many phases to be altogether pleasing. However, with a grunt of relief, he took up one more letter, which bore an address written by the honoured

hand of Mr. A. O. Humebogue. Here at all events he would find independence of character amid the crawling mass of Babus. Mr. Humebogue had so often explained to him that a vegetable diet was *the* thing to develop moral courage, that he felt sure that he too could not have deserted him in his woe. He opened it and read—

"HONOURED PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZEN OF ARYAVARTA,—

"The whole mighty world around us is bound by one chain, the Absolute and the Immoveable. Where and what is the immortal and primeval essence? This problem, the Hermetic philosophy or Wisdom-religion, is alone capable of solving satisfactorily. The Filia Vocis has lifted the veil of the Sanctum Sanctorum, and the Alpha and Omega is but the manifestation of the Adam Kadmon, the Macrocosm of the Stupendous Whole. In the Arcanum of the Gnostics and the Kabalists the Magnale Mag-

num is the Azoth, the Ophis is the Logos, and Nout, or Nought, is the one-only—one," and so on as far as the bewildered President could see for three or four more closely-written pages. All this was deeply interesting, and it seemed familiar, as the President had once been an ardent student of Theosophical literature, but it had not much to do with the matter on hand, and the Babu began to wish that his correspondent would stick a little more closely to the point. At last he came to something that seemed to bear on the events of the day—"Therefore, my dear brother," he read, "I shall be with you in the spirit, if not in the body ('I'd much rather have him here in the body,' groaned the unfortunate President), and I shall watch with interest the forces of philosophy prevailing, as I am confident they will do against the brutal tendencies of military violence. But I must explain my action to you more fully, and you will see that none but a skeptic could have refused

obedience to the divine behest under which I now act.

"I was sitting last night in my verandah trying to gain some insight into the present crisis from the luminous pages of 'Isis Unveiled.' The night was warm, and I was wishing that some one would unveil some ices before me. (This admirable jest is not original. I read in the Transactions of the Theosophical Society that it was made by our revered founder Colonel Olcott. He had a true American humour and was found of his joke, and this appears to have been *one of his best.*) Occasionally my attention wandered, for it is difficult on an April evening in Calcutta to follow the close reasoning, and appreciate at its proper value the accurate grasp of the true method of scientific research, which distinguish that immortal work, and I found myself at times drowsily humming a little song, the words and music of which were alike *original*, composed by Colonel Olcott when

he was on earth in a materialized form, beginning—

"Oh Aryavarta's a sultry clime,
Where I used to eat vegetables all the time,
While Madame Blavatsky, that dear old gal,
Held converse high with Koot Homi Lal,
Oh up in the Himalayas,
Oh up in the Himalayas,
Oh up in the Himalayas so free
Where dwell the Eternal Trinitee.

"A poor thing,' Olcott is reported to have said (which it certainly was,—very poor), 'but my own.' Well, I was humming this little artless ballad, and I must, I presume, have arrived at a hypnotized state of existence, for I beheld before me in a vision the mighty Mother, or may I not rather call her Grandmother, of Theosophy, Madame Blavatsky herself. I knew it was she, for I recognized the mystic ring she wore on her third finger, which it would not become me further to describe, and she spoke unto me in the ancient Aryan tongue, the following striking words, '*Kul Parliament-House ke turuf mutjao.*'

"'But why, oh mighty Grandmother!' I enquired in the same venerable and sacred dialect.

"'The three persons of the esoteric Trimurti,' she replied, 'have revealed to me that the Nihilistic forces of Militarism will reduce the voice of Aryavarta to Nirvana. The Assembly will perish, though so young. But alas! as the Latin poet says,' '*Quem deus vult perdere prius dementat*' ('Whom the gods love die early').

"Her words, though her translation from the Latin was questionable, had an effect on me, for you see, *although she was a Russian in the flesh*, I thought it quite possible that, in a matter of this kind, she might be speaking the truth.

"'I will abstain from attending the Assembly,' I replied after a moment's reflection, 'since such are your divine commands, mighty Grandmother; but am I deceived, is it indeed Blavatsky that I see before me, or are you an Eidolon?'

"I thought this Greek word would please her; she had exhibited such a remarkable acquaint

ance with this ancient language in her writings.

"'Do you not know me?' she answered with a piercing glance.

"'Guess I do,' I said, adopting almost insensibly the phraseology of our beloved American founder 'yer' old pie, aint yer.'

"'O thou of little faith,' she replied, 'almost unworthy to carry on the sacred tradition of Theosophy, and yet I must save thee. Retire, therefore, forthwith to the solitude of the highest peaks of the Himalayas, or seek the brooding quiet of reflection in the birthplace of our religion, the ancient and mystic Broadway, so shalt thou carry on the divine torch of illumination, and the cause of Theosophy shall still go boomingly along.'

"This last venerable and well-remembered phrase left no further doubt in my mind. 'Ah,' I cried, 'now I know thee, the associate and friend of the cosmopolitan but still Yankee Olcott.'

"'What futher proof is needed?' replied the Dear Old Lady, 'but thy faith is weak, look on the small table near the window, there thou wilt find a cigarette, and by that thou shalt know that I am Blavatsky.' She spoke and slowly faded from view, and I awoke with a start, my first impulse was to go to the small table near the window, there *was* a cigarette on it (I always keep my cigarettes there), so I knew that the vision had been divine, and that I must at all hazards obey the supernatural voice. Hence it is my brother that I am not with you to-day to share in the possible triumph of moral force, but commune with me (though absent) through the medium of the Post Office, and let me hear of your strivings and glories. Also remit my pay, if possible, regularly on the first of each month.

"Your brother and fellow-worker in Aryavarta,

A. O. HUMEBOGUE.

"*P.S.*—Letters may be addressed to me 'care of Koot Hoomi Lall Sing, The Eternal Trinity

House, Himalayas,' or to the 'Fifth' Avenue Hotel, New York.' The latter address is perhaps the most likely to find me, and it is the one to which my pay should *invariably* be remitted."

"So he's off too," thought the miserable President, and he laid his head on his arms on the table before him and wept: every thing was still, but the very quiet and solitude appalled him; and he could have screamed with terror. At length the tramp of feet was heard outside, the chuprassie rushed up, and announced that the General Sahib was coming, and was bringing his army with him. The Babu staggered to his feet. "Tell the Gen ——," he began, when a shot was heard outside, and he fled incontinently towards the back-door, dropping his robes as he fled. Then he stopped, should he imitate the base flight of his colleague? No! he would return, though he was alone, and die at his———. Another shot and a blank cartridge fired from a

nine-pounder. The excited imagination of the Babu seemed to see a shell already penetrating the sacred chamber, and making straight for his head. Uncontrollable terror seized him again, and again he bolted towards the door. But again his sense of dignity stayed him as he was about to disappear, and he slowly turned and came back towards his chair grasping his gown.

Give my orders to the General Sahib," he began, "that he should at once——." What this stern demand was to be remains historical conjecture to this day. A loud knocking came at the door and another blank cartridge ; it was too much, the back-door was temptingly open, and he fled through it like a startled hare. The last thing the chuprassie saw was the sheen of a pair of patent leather shoes, and a wisp of black hair going round the corner as the President rapidly disappeared from view. He fled murmuring, and with him fled for ever constitutional Government from the sacred land of India.

When General Ahmed Shah burst open the door, save for one trembling chuprassie, 365 inkstand desks and seats, and 365 Roget's Thesauri of Words and Phrases, the Hall was empty.

παντας βεβὼτας ἄνδρα δ οὐδεν ἐντοπον

No need further to overawe the Assembly, the Assembly had ceased to exist.

EPILOGUE.

And now the state of India recalled the good old times of two hundred years before. Scindia declared war against Holkar, and devastated the rich lands of Central India, while the Bheels and Pindaries attached themselves to either side alternately, and looted both with indiscriminate energy. The Nizam marched on Mysore, and threatened Travancore, while the dacoits of the Maratha country entrenched themselves in the mountain fastnesses of the Western Ghauts, and descended at intervals on the Deccan and the Konkan, carrying fire and sword wherever they went. The loot and burning of Bombay was long afterwards celebrated in Marathi ballads, and the pirates from Angria's Coast spread their depredations as far as Surat and Broach. A combined force of Russians and Afghans harried the Punjab, sacked Lahore and marched on Delhi, while General Ahmed Shah, who had promptly had the old Commander-in-Chief

strangled, and then proclaimed himself head of the forces, and subsequently Emperor of Delhi, advanced slowly from the eastwards to meet them. The Chinese poured an army through the Thibetan Passes into Nepaul, and sent demands of tribute to the princes of India, while Rajputana wasted its strength in constant intertribal conflicts. The French sent a strong naval and military force to Pondicherry, with fifty thousand tricolour flags, and orders for wholesale annexation; while the king of Burmah marched his forces on Rangoon. Famine and pestilence followed in the wake of the destroying armies, fields were left uncultivated, bridges and railways were every where destroyed, and the country sank into hopeless anarchy. Such were the pleasing features which distinguished the closing days of the year 1983, while far in a darker isle sat each Radical elector in greasy comfort at his free breakfast table, while his newspapers and his leaders congratulated him on his foresight in

declining to interfere in the affairs of alien races, and on having finally decided, after two hundred years of iniquitous possession, to allow India to stew in her own juice.

Is there no penalty doomed to come on the nation, as on the individual, who makes the "gran rifiuto?"

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